

Nicht herangezogen hat er die für diese Diskussion wichtige Arbeit von G. TIMMERMANN, Vom Einbaum zum Wikingerschiff. Das Hirschsprung-Boot. Schiff und Hafen 1956, 336–342, obwohl er sie im Literaturverzeichnis zitiert. Timmermann hatte darin die Bootsform von Hjortspring ingenieurmäßig berechnet und gefragt, wie der vorgeschichtliche Mensch diese komplizierte Form ohne Kenntnis der höheren Mathematik habe finden können. Er beantwortete diese Frage mit dem genialen, jederzeit nachvollziehbaren Schreibpapierversuch: Er bog einen Bogen Schreibpapier zu einer im Querschnitt halbrunden Rinne, kniff beide Enden bootsförmig zusammen, spreizte die Mitte und hatte die Form des Hjortspring-Bootes! Das einzige Material, aus dem man auf diese Weise ein reales Boot formen konnte, war Baumrinde. Daraus müsse, so schloss er, der die Form vorgebende Vorläufer dieses Bootes gebaut worden sein. Tatsächlich wurde bereits 1934 bei Bysslätt in Västergötland ein freilich nicht sehr gut dokumentiertes Rindenboot ausgegraben (P. HUMBLA/L. VON POST, Galabäcksbåten och tidigt båtbyggeri i Norden, 1937, S. 11. – K. HANSEN/J. S. MADSEN, Barkbåde, 1981, 4–5). Selbst nach der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts waren in Innernorwegen noch Boote aus Birkenrinde im Einsatz (U. SCHNALL, Fähre, Pferd und Wagen. Das innernorwegische Verkehrssystem bei Jules Verne. Deutsches Schifffahrtsarchiv 11, 1988, 43–58 hier 53 f.). Weiter hat die mit harziger Kittmasse abgedichtete Schnurnahat des Hjortspring-Bootes ihre Vorläufer in den zahlreich ausgegrabenen bronzezeitlichen „Harzdichtungen“ von Rinden- oder Spanbehältern. Schließlich würde die gegen Stoß empfindliche Baumrinde auch erklären, weshalb unter den bronzezeitlichen Booten eine Kufe angebracht werden musste: Sie schützte die Außenhaut beim Landen durch Auflaufen. Da die gesamte wissenschaftliche Diskussion zu diesem Punkt in der zu rezensierenden Publikation ausgeblendet bleibt, kann sie auch nicht den entscheidenden schiffbautechnischen Schritt darlegen, der mit Booten vom Typ Hjortspring offensichtlich erstmals vollzogen wurde, nämlich den Übergang vom Baumaterial Baumrinde zum Baumaterial Holz, das fortan den Bau skandinavischer Wasserfahrzeuge prägte. Es müssen geschickte Könner gewesen sein, die diesen wichtigen Schritt erstmals vollzogen, denn sie verbanden die vom Rindenboot gewohnte, für Kriegszüge entscheidende Leichtigkeit der Konstruktion mit der größeren Festigkeit des neuen Materials.

Schade, dass das aufwendig ausgestattete Buch in diesem doch nicht unwichtigen Punkt hinter dem Forschungsstand so weit zurückbleibt, dass es ihn noch nicht einmal diskutiert! Im übrigen macht es seinen Gegenstand durch Zusammenfassungen in englischer, dänischer und deutscher Sprache sowie durch ein Register und ein umfassendes Literaturverzeichnis sowohl für den mit der Materie nicht vertrauten Leser wie für weiterführende Forschungen gut zugänglich.

D-27568 Bremerhaven
Oldenburger Straße 24

Detlev Ellmers

MICHEL REDDÉ, Alésia. L'archéologie face à l'imaginaire. Editions Errance, Collection Haut lieux de l'histoire, Paris 2003. 36,— €. ISBN 2-87772-245-7. 209 Seiten mit zahlreichen Abbildungen.

The extensive Roman siegeworks around the late La Tène oppidum on Mont-Auxois at Alise-Sainte-Reine in Burgundy were first systematically investigated and planned during the 1860s. These original excavations were part of a wider programme of research initiated by the

emperor Napoleon III into sites where significant battles had taken place during the Caesarian conquest of Gaul. The sites identified during this programme included a large Roman camp at Mauchamp beside the river Aisne, where Caesar defeated the Belgic confederation in 57 B.C.; the oppidum of *Gergovia* in the Auvergne, where Caesar came close to suffering a major defeat at the hands of the Arvernian noble, Vercingetorix, the leader of the Gaulish revolt of 52 B.C.; and not least, the site of *Alesia*, where later in the same year, Caesar turned the table on his opponent, who finally surrendered at the end of a long siege, described in rich detail in the Roman general's commentaries. At Alise-Sainte-Reine, Napoleon's investigators, directed by Colonel Stoffel, unearthed a complex of Roman forts and defensive works around Mont-Auxois, which apparently corresponded in every particular with the lines of investment described by Caesar, leaving little scope for doubt that this was indeed *Alesia*, especially as they also uncovered a large quantity of material of the right date, including late Iron Age weaponry and coinage and nearly 150 Republican denarii, none of them later than 52 B.C.

Since the 1860s, a number of identifications put forward in Napoleon's Atlas (NAPOLEON III, *Histoire de Jules César* [Paris 1865–66]) have for quite understandable reasons come under scrutiny by Iron Age and Roman archaeologists. For example, E. M. WIGHTMAN, *Gallia Belgica* (London 1985) 38, 69 has questioned the date of the Mauchamp camp, arguing that the *claviculae* at the entrances point to a Flavian date and suggesting that it might instead be connected with the Batavian uprising of A.D. 69. And on page 66, Reddé reproduces a plate from the Atlas, showing the supposed site in the Fôret de Compiègne where in 51 B.C. Caesar defeated the *Bellovaci*. However, the 'Roman camp' that Napoleon III excavated there is in fact a late La Tène oppidum (Saint-Pierre-en-Chastres). Whilst this could have been used by Caesar's army – he did so frequently – or erected by Gaulish auxiliaries serving with the Romans, as has been suggested for the La Chaussée-Tirancourt oppidum in Somme (J.-L. BRUNAUX/ST. FICHTL/P. MARCHAND, *Die Ausgrabungen am Haupttor des „Camp César“ bei La Chaussée-Tirancourt* [Dept. Somme, Frankreich]. *Saalburg-Jahrb.* 45, 1990, 5–23), the site is quite different in character from the Caesarian camps at *Alesia* or *Gergovia*, and this particular identification must be considered doubtful.

Of all the sites in Napoleon's Atlas, the recognition of Alise-Sainte-Reine as the place of Vercingetorix's final defeat in 52 B.C. has always seemed the most secure, as certain as anything can be when archaeology and ancient history meet. Like other archaeologists specialising in the late Iron Age, the only serious questions I had about the evidence unearthed in the 1860s were methodological. Could archaeologists working without the advantages of modern survey technology really have located the Roman siegeworks with such precision? Were their remains still apparent on the ground in the 1860s (according to Reddé, hardly any traces survive today)? How safe was it to employ 52 B.C. as a *terminus ante quem* for the chronology of Gaulish coinage and other late Iron Age material found in the 1860s? Individual provenances were often unavailable. Might some of the weapons and coins in fact have been deposited later as offerings at a shrine erected after the battle?

Between 1991–97, the Alésia siegeworks were the focus of a major new Franco-German programme of investigation, led by Michel Reddé, the author of this book, and Siegmund von Schnurbein, the director of the Römisch-Germanische Kommission. A definitive report on this work was published with exemplary efficiency only four years after the excavations (M. REDDÉ/S. V. SCHNURBEIN [eds], *Alésia: fouilles et recherches Franco-Allemands sur les Travaux militaires Romains autour du Mont-Auxois* [1991–1997]. *Mém. Acad. Inscript. et Belles-Lettres* 22 [Paris 2001]). The new research entirely endorsed the results of the earlier excavations, not just in outline, but also in detail. Some of the Roman fortifications identified in the 1860s are

no longer accessible, but where they are, the match with the original record is so close that we can surely be confident that the information about siegeworks that have now vanished is also substantially correct. Indeed, as the original letters reproduced by Reddé show, the excavations overseen by Colonel Stoffel were clearly among the most technically accomplished of the nineteenth century, just one of the many fascinating insights to arise from his book.

The new excavations were able to add a significant account of new information about how the elaborate siegeworks were constructed using locally-available resources and the devices that were employed to protect the besiegers from attack. Caesar was a great innovator and it turns out that several of the camps at Alésia have *claviculae*, refuting Wightman's argument against Mauchamp having been his battlefield camp at the Aisne. Two lead projectiles inscribed in the name of Titus Labienus were found at Camp C, suggesting that this was the headquarters of Caesar's second-in-command, whilst the presence of a hinged bronze brooch of the so-called Alésia type in the ditch of camp A seems to confirm Duval's view that this type was already current in the mid-first century B.C. (A. DUVAL, Un type particulier de fibule gallo-romain précoce, la fibule «d'Alésia». *Ant. Nat.* 6, 1974, 67–76.) There has also been new research on the Gaulish oppidum, of which our knowledge was previously very restricted, due primarily to the presence of a monumental Gallo-Roman complex on the summit of Mont-Auxois, which has long impeded investigation of the underlying Iron Age levels. Building on the results of Bénard's excavations beneath the Roman forum in the 1970s and 1980s, this new work has shown that the oppidum was occupied from at least the start of La Tène D2 and protected at both ends of the hill by ramparts of *muris Gallicis* type.

All this, and much more, is detailed in Michel Reddé's excellent new book, in my view easily the best yet written about this most pivotal and contradictory of French monuments, where a newly unified Gaulish nation suffered a catastrophic defeat, but in doing so, opened the way to the civilising influences of Rome and set the stage for the development of a brilliant Gallo-Roman culture, the legacies of which are still everywhere apparent in modern France. No less fascinating of course is the parallel between the defeat at *Alesia* and the humiliation of 1870 – less than five years after the investigations had concluded – when the French army allowed itself to be trapped at Sedan, a disaster which led to the abdication of Napoleon III and thus ultimately to birth of the modern French republic. Following the new excavations, it seems only natural that one of the co-directors should write a book about Alésia with the aims of presenting the latest information to the wider French public and describing the absorbing history of the investigations, from the first 'plan' of the siegeworks drawn by D. Jourdain and published by J.B. Bourguignon d'Anville in 1841 to show how the topography of Mont-Auxois and its environs perfectly fitted Caesar's description, right up to the present day.

It thus came as quite a shock to read Reddé's book and to find that it was written not just to present the results of the latest work to a non-specialist audience, but also to convince a sceptical French public that Alise-Sainte-Reine – and not some other site – was indeed the *Alesia* of Caesar and Vercingetorix. Instead of dispelling any minor lingering doubts about Napoleon III's identification of the site, the new excavations had, it seems, actually re-ignited a national controversy that goes back to the time of the original investigations, and has raged on and off, ever since. Over the years, numerous alternatives have been put forward as the location of the Caesarian battlefield, many of them in Franche-Comté to the southeast of Burgundy. At one level, this is not surprising. Caesar has little to say about the general location of *Alesia* beyond reporting that the Gaulish army engineered a confrontation whilst he was marching through the southeastern part of Lingones territory en route for that of the *Sequani*. Defeated, Vercingetorix retreated to the *oppidum*, which lay between one and two day's march

away and belonged to the *Mandubii* – a group about whom we are not otherwise informed. However, Dio Cassius, writing in the third century A. D., states that this encounter took place in the territory of the *Sequani*, which is generally seen as beginning east of the river Saône, in other words placing it in Franche-Comté.

Modern archaeology was still in its infancy in the 1860s and it is easy enough to see why at this era – and given the apparent contradiction in the historical sources – imperial recognition of Alise-Sainte-Reine as *Alesia* should have sparked a series of counter-claims in the regions. Even today, Parisian opinions are not always welcomed with open arms in the provinces! I would have to admit, however, that until I read Reddé's book, I was unaware of the extent to which the location of *Alesia* was still an issue with the French public, although I did receive intimation that all was not as it seemed when I visited the Jura at Easter 2004. My wife and I bought a new Michelin "Green guide" to the region, which in its latest English edition, has combined Franche-Comté with Burgundy (Michelin. The Green Guide. Burgundy Jura. [Watford 2003]). I was, however, slightly surprised to find an entry under Champagnole (Jura) reporting that excavations in the Syam plain 'had enabled a team of archaeologists to say they believe they have located the site of the Battle of Alésia' (ibid. 203). My first reaction was that this was the result of poor editing when the old guides were merged and that the editors were perhaps unaware of the 1990s excavations, which had after all only recently been published. Not at all! When I turned to the entry for Alise-Sainte-Reine, I found that this contained a brief outline of the controversy about the identification of *Alesia*, which ends as follows: "The latest excavation work (1991–98) undertaken in this area could not reconcile Caesar's account of the battle with what was found on location and, in November 1998, it was officially stated that Alise was no longer considered as the site of the battle of *Alesia*. The mystery remains intact." (Michelin 2003, 126).

Officially stated by whom? Even allowing for any infelicities of translation, this was fairly definite stuff! I made a note to read Reddé's book as soon as I got back. Having now done so, I see why he felt compelled to write the book and I applaud him for it. In a world where the past is increasingly seen as belonging to everyone, there are always likely to be discrepant views about certain issues, both among archaeologists, and especially between them and other interest groups who do not necessarily play by the same rules of evidence and argument that archaeologists use with one another. Hence the sub-title, «l'archéologie face à l'imaginaire».

What are archaeologists to do in this new world where anything goes? In my view, the answer must be to do exactly what Reddé does so successfully in this book, which is to present the evidence and reasoning that underlies the preferred interpretation as accessibly as possible, whilst giving a fair hearing to the possible alternatives. Following a brief preface (by Barry Cunliffe) and introduction, the main text is divided into three parts. The first of these sections succinctly reviews the wider archaeological and historical background to the events of 52 B. C. and takes the story on to the end of the Gallic war. The topics covered include the social forces driving the militaristic expansion of the late Roman republic; the character of the late Iron Age peoples of Gaul and their relationship with Rome prior to the mid first century B. C.; the organisation of the late Republican army; and then the events of the Gallic war itself. The latter is illustrated by reproductions of many of the original plates from Napoleon's Atlas, as fresh and informative today as when they were first published. Reddé's clear exposition is aided further by the use of text boxes, which give more detailed insights into specific issues – ranging from Caesar's portrait of Gaulish society to the judgement on him delivered by another equally illustrious captain of arms (Napoleon I) – without interfering with the main flow of the text.

The second part deals with the search for *Alesia*, from the earliest medieval attempts to locate the site right up to the present day. In identifying Alise-Sainte-Reine with *Alesia*, Napoleon III and his investigators were following a tradition that goes back to at least the eleventh century, if not earlier still. In 1855, however, Alphonse Delacroix, the city architect at Besançon, put forward a revolutionary alternative: *Alesia* was in fact Alaise in Doubs. In the ensuing debate, other candidates soon came forward, and it was this that led Napoleon III to begin a programme of excavation at Alise-Sainte-Reine. The unfolding of the investigations is described in detail and makes enthralling reading, as I have already indicated. However, it was not so much the results of the excavations, conclusive though they appeared to be, as Napoleon's defeat in 1870 – with its uneasy parallels with that of 52 B.C. – that led to the elevation of Vercingetorix to the status of national hero and to *Alesia* being enshrined in national consciousness as the place where the history of Gaul ended, and that of France began. Reddé goes on to discuss the alternative candidates for *Alesia* put forward over the years, and explains the so-called portrait robot developed by André Berthier, drawing on the topographic details supplied by Caesar and various strategic and tactical considerations. It is on this portrait robot that the claims of Syam-Cornu in the Jura are largely founded. Reddé discusses this site in detail, noting that although there have been several excavations there since the 1960s, none of the material found appears to be earlier than Gallo-Roman.

The third and final section presents the archaeological evidence from Alise-Sainte-Reine, beginning with the various excavations undertaken on Mont-Auxois since the nineteenth century. Where conclusive evidence is lacking, Reddé is not afraid to say so, as for instance with regard to the dating of the two *muri Gallici*. The results of the 1991–97 excavations on the Roman camps and entrenchments are presented in some detail, supported by numerous colour photographs and plans, so that readers can see for themselves precisely what was found and how well the different features correspond with Caesar's account. The new investigations also involved a comprehensive reassessment of many of the 1860s finds, particularly the coins and weaponry. These studies, too, are briefly summarised, and their significance explained in the light of current knowledge and the new finds from the site.

The book is greatly enhanced by the superb illustrations, which also include a series of imaginative aquarelles by Jean-Claude Golvin showing how the siege lines might have looked; the beautifully detailed military reconstruction drawings of Peter Connolly; and the panoramic air photographs taken by René Goguy, on which the siegeworks still show in quite incredible detail. Whilst the book is aimed at the more general reader, I would unreservedly recommend it to any archaeologist or student with an interest in the period and on account of its methodological interest as one of the rare occasions when the written sources and the evidence on the ground do correspond in every detail. Personally, I am convinced that by the time they have finished this book, its readers will agree that Reddé has made a flawless case and that Alise-Sainte-Reine is without doubt the *Alesia* of Caesar's day. We must hope that they will include the editors of the Michelin Guide!

Leicester LE1 7RH
University Road
E-Mail: cch7@le.ac.uk

Colin Haselgrove
University of Leicester
School of Archaeology and Ancient History